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THE NEW SUEZ CANAL.

CONSIDERATIONS

ADDRESSED TO

THE COMMITTEE OF SHIPOWNERS

APPOINTED AT

THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, MAY 10th, AT
THE CANNON STREET HOTEL.

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METCHIM & SON, 20, PARLIAMENT STREET, S.W., AND
32, CLEMENT'S LANE, E.C.



THE NEW SUEZ CANAL.



THE question of the Suez Canal is pregnant with issues so momentous, that no proposed solution can ever be accepted by Her Majesty's Government, which does not command the assent of the Nation. Any difficulties, engineering or financial, which may have to be surmounted, are insignificant in comparison with those which a consideration of the political position discloses. It may be wise that the responsibility of the initiative should be left to private persons, but no Company, however constituted, can be strong enough to construct a second Canal through Egypt without the support of the Ministry and of Parliament, with whom the ultimate acceptance or rejection of any proposal which may be made must necessarily rest. Not even the shipowners and the Chambers of Commerce, acting in unison, will be able to enforce their views, unless those views are approved by the people of England.

Doubtless the Committee appointed at the meeting held on Thursday, May the 10th, are better qualified than any other body of men could be, to explain the nature of the present hindrances to our Oriental trade, and to suggest the proper remedies; but great as the influence of the gentlemen who compose that Committee, deservedly is, they will not attain the objects which they

have in view, unless they approach the consideration of the question in the spirit of statesmen, unless they recognise limitations imposed by the peculiar necessities of the case, unless they are prepared to admit that there exist arguments which may have more weight with the nation than an increase of speed in the rate of passage between London and Bombay, or than a diminution in the freight of cargoes.

British merchants have a strong case against the present Canal, but to exaggerate a good case is to weaken it, to claim more than can rightly be demanded is to discredit it, to ask that which should be refused, is to lose the chance of obtaining relief which may be secured by consulting national as well as commercial interests.

The Suez Canal is not only a trade route, it is also the most important, and, at present, the weakest link in the chain which unites England with her vast possessions in the East, and no proposal for a new Canal will merit serious attention, which does not, while affording the increased accommodation which shipowners have a right to expect, add something to the security of our communications with India and Australia. The present must not be allowed to mask the future, and the possibilities of war must be considered as well as the more immediate needs of peace.

While it would be a national folly, and little short of a national crime, to let the opportunity of our present position in Egypt pass without the settlement of a question in which we are so deeply interested, the rights of others must be respected. So long as this is done, so long as we show due consideration for the legal claims of Mons. de Lesseps and of his shareholders, our just claim to make a road to our Indian empire, which shall be at

all times under our own control, is beyond dispute. The only valid objections could be raised by Egypt, and if we are careful to protect and advance her interests, her approval is not doubtful. Fortified by the consent of the landowner, we cannot be expected to acquiesce any longer in a state of things inconvenient and possibly prejudicial to ourselves, when it is in our power to change it.

In order to arrive at a clear view of the changes which should be effected, we must consider at some little length the nature of our present difficulties and some suggested remedies.

In spite of the success of the Suez Canal and of its present importance to the trade of the world, it may still be questioned whether England has on the whole profited by its construction. Having now the choice of two roads to the East, the Canal and the Ocean, we use, and shall certainly continue to use, that which effects a saving of time ; but there are yet some who retain their opinion that we lost rather than gained in strength by the opening of a maritime route to India across Egypt, inasmuch as that route is not under our management, and may possibly be interfered with at a critical moment by African, Asiatic, or European Powers, who would be entirely unable to hamper the freedom of our action on the open sea. It is no slight inconvenience, and may become no trivial danger, that our way should cross foreign territory, that our navies, whether of peace or war, should be confined at one portion of their voyage to the narrow passage of a Canal which is not in our own hands, and that our command of the sea should thus be subjected to restrictions, the exact effect of which at a time of need can hardly be estimated beforehand.

That those who made the Canal, believed that it would in time of war be a source of danger to our Eastern possessions is certain. It is by no means certain that they were mistaken. An English Canal would have been an addition to the strength of England ; a French Canal could hardly be expected to produce the same result.

What no one foresaw was the immense development of a special branch of our mercantile marine, which has resulted from the construction of the Suez Canal. By this fact a totally new state of things has arisen, and we have become more interested than any other nation in the maintenance of a road, to which we once saw objections which have not lost all their force because the road is in other respects useful to us. While the sovereignty of the country through which the Canal passes is Egyptian or Turkish, while the direction remains in French hands, the merchants who use it, the ships which pass through it, the money which pays its shareholders are mainly English. That the undertaking has proved to be a financial success is due entirely to English enterprise, which quickly recognised the commercial value of Mons. de Lesseps' great work. Our position is not a dignified one. We opposed the original project for a maritime Canal, and are its principal customers ; we recognise that it is the gate of India, and we leave the key in other hands ; we pay its expenses, while others make the laws under which we are permitted to use it.

Hitherto we have been unable to help ourselves. We had made a mistake and were obliged to bear its consequences. We never ought to have suffered the junction between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea to be

made by any hands but ours. We thought the scheme impracticable and stood aloof from it; we ought to have seen that it was practicable and made it our own. We repeated the blunder of those Sovereigns who refused the offers of Columbus to show the way to a new world, but, having once perceived the blunder, we lost no time in making use of the discovery which we had previously rejected. We can take credit for no more than this, that we accepted the situation frankly, and showed no foolish ill humour with those who had been wiser than we. To act otherwise would only have been to put ourselves more in the wrong.

The routes of commerce, like the paths of Empire, settle themselves by a balance of considerations, many of which are small, and which tend every year to become more minute. They cannot be deranged by authority, no Government can fix them, they are not primarily influenced by the instinct of patriotism. At present our Eastern trade and our communications with that vast and scattered Empire, the shores of which are washed by Southern Seas, tend by the operation of causes which can only be indirectly controlled, to pass through the artificial passage which Mons. de Lesseps opened for them. It becomes then the duty of the English Government and of Englishmen to make that passage as safe and as convenient as possible. Under its present condition, and under its present management, the Suez Canal is neither safe nor convenient. On these two points at all events, there is universal agreement; for the one has been decided by the recent action of Her Majesty's Government in proposing neutralisation, and the other by the unanimous expression of mercantile opinion.

Whatever the attractions of a quick route to India may

be, however valuable the power of despatching troops within the shortest possible time to or from the East, nothing is gained, unless that route is sure to be at all times open to our ships. At a time of sudden danger in India, or when England is threatened with the complication of a European war, a few days more or less may be of incalculable value. Then it may be all important to the security of our Empire, that the communication between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean should be speedy and unhindered; but it is precisely under these conditions that an unimpeded passage from Port Said to Suez cannot be relied on. We may guard the extremities with fleets, which will thus be rendered useless for other work, but, if we cannot traverse the Canal itself, we derive no advantage from its existence. All that our maritime preponderance will enable us to do, is to prevent others from using it to our damage. In order to be certain of using it ourselves, we must hold and defend it. Is it probable that, at such a time as we are now considering, we could spare soldiers to occupy the Canal itself, and unless we are prepared to take this measure, where will be our profit? These risks are not merely hypothetical. We have had recent experience of the manner in which French officials use their opportunities, and it would be folly to neglect the warning. Even at a time when we were engaged in the prosecution of objects which had the approval of France, the Directors of the Company showed no desire to facilitate our movements. If we were engaged in a war with which France had no sympathy, what treatment could we expect? It is needless to ask further what would happen in a case when French interests might be opposed to ours.

If Frenchmen think it hard that Englishmen should decline to leave their highroad to India subject to the rule of a French Company, they must remember that they have Mons. de Lesseps to thank for an unwelcome decision. It may be well on this point to quote the opinion of an impartial critic. Lt.-Col. Hermann Vogt, after referring in language of studied moderation to the proceedings of Mons. de Lesseps, at the time of the occupation of the Suez Canal by the English army in August of last year, adds "England can come to no other conclusion than that she ought to keep possession of this important maritime passage ; important, not only for herself, but for the whole world, as well for commercial as for military purposes."*

The possible, the inevitable dangers of foreign control it is understood that Her Majesty's Government propose to meet by neutralisation ; but if the neutralisation of the Canal is all that England is to gain from her recent interference in Egypt, she might have saved her money and the lives of her men. That proposal needed no military operation to enforce its acceptance, yet it was the paramount importance of maintaining uninterrupted communication with the East, which was declared to be the justification of the Egyptian expedition. Our interest is to extend as widely as possible the activity of our fleets in time of war ; to declare any waters neutral is to limit their activity. Neutralisation benefits all other maritime powers more than ourselves, for the simple reason that it removes a certain portion of the sea from the control of that power which rules the sea.

* The Egyptian War of 1882, by Lt.-Col. Hermann Vogt, of the German Army. Translators—Kegan, Paul, French & Co., 1883. Pages 128 and 130.

How far will neutralisation protect us from the consequences of war? The battle excluded from the Canal will rage outside the defined boundaries, our ships will be exposed to attack before entering and after leaving the neutral waters, their path to and from the mouth of the Canal can be exactly calculated, the road will still be unsafe, because the portion protected by the international police will only be a fraction of the whole. To protect ourselves effectually, we shall have to clear the Mediterranean and the Red Sea of hostile fleets; we shall have to take precisely the same measures of defence whether the Canal is declared to be neutral or not.

Neutralisation then gives us no sufficient return for the sacrifices which we have made; considered as a result of our recent war it is an absurdity, for it weakens rather than strengthens our power in comparison with that of other nations; and it has dangers of its own. The necessity, which we shall be under, of defending and maintaining such regulations as may be made, will tend, when we are at war, to embroil us with neutral powers, and, when we are at peace, to drag us into the strife of combatants.

Nor is it by any means certain that neutralisation would stand the strain of national interests or of roused passions. Neutralisation is, after all, nothing but the result of a collective treaty, and treaties are not always, if ever, respected by belligerents. Recent history has not tended to establish their sanctity or the value of international guarantees. They are good just so long as they are needless; at the time of trial they are broken reeds, which pierce the hand. And if we cannot trust others to observe them, can we trust ourselves? It would not be difficult to imagine circumstances, under

which it might be the imperative duty of an English Government to violate the neutrality of the Canal for reasons of self-protection. No one doubts that in that case we should act, as we have acted before. The fewer treaties we make, which restrain our right of self-defence, the better for us, whatever name we may choose to call them by, and those engagements are above all to be avoided, which we may ourselves find it necessary to break.

Our interest in securing our own right of way to India at all times is so vital that we cannot accept a paper security, when it is in our power to obtain a real one. It is not denied that neutralisation offers us some advantages at certain times, that for instance it is desirable that, when England is at peace, the Canal should not become the battle ground of other nations who may be at war, to the detriment of our commerce, but it is clear that a Canal under English control would offer us a far more effectual protection than any agreement can afford. For such a Canal we can make our own rules; we can use it as we choose and when we choose; and for its defence we can take such measures as we judge necessary. The value of a second Canal to us is not materially affected by the neutralisation of the existing Canal.

While the Suez Canal is under present conditions, and must continue to be under the contemplated conditions, unsafe in time of war, it is inadequate for the purposes of peace. The depositions from the Chambers of Shipping and of Commerce, which were received by Lord Granville on the 26th of April, have placed this fact beyond a doubt. It is quite unnecessary to repeat well-known figures. There is not room for the existing

traffic ; there will be still less for the rapidly increasing traffic ; there are many minor inconveniences, which cause unnecessary delay and needless expense. Complaints, however well founded, receive slight attention from the authorities. The monopoly possessed by the Company has had its natural results in incivility and extortionate charges.

These defects and annoyances neutralisation will do nothing to remedy. It will rather tend to perpetuate them, for the new position made for the old Company will strengthen its powers, and it is not strong Companies confirmed in the possession of exclusive privileges, which do most for the public service. Still less can a French Company, protected and sustained by an international guarantee, be expected to diminish its profits for the convenience of English merchants, and in order to facilitate the extension of British trade.

Various suggestions have from time to time been made for the improvement or enlargement of the Canal under the present management, but even if such proposals should be accepted, and it is by no means evident that they are favourably regarded by the shareholders, they are all open to the same objections. They may increase the accommodation of the Canal, but they do not tend to increase its safety. They leave British commerce under the control of a power which is certainly foreign, and may possibly be hostile. To accept them would be to give a hostage of yearly increasing value to the stranger.

All that Mons. de Lesseps has shown any disposition to do is to make certain minor improvements, quite inadequate to the future requirements of our trade ; but if we first induced and then assisted him to double the

present Canal, or to make a second parallel Canal—a work which the Company cannot do without obtaining fresh powers, since they have sold to the Egyptian Government, at a high price, the land which they had received as a free gift—we should only increase the authority of a Governing Body, which would still be independent of England. When the Canal had been neutralised and made twice as large, its owners would be twice as powerful. We should have presented France, or if not France then Europe, with the fee simple of a road which is far more important to ourselves than to any other nation. It is true that we should, in common with others, possess a right of way, but by assuring that right to all we place those least interested in the Canal on the same footing as ourselves. It is not for Englishmen to ignore the claims of England in order to establish a Republic of Nations on Egyptian ground.

If it is then impossible for us to leave France in possession of our highway to the East, can we persuade her to admit us to a share in the Government of the present Canal? Is a partnership possible? One of the gentlemen present at the meeting on May the 10th urged that proposals should be made to Mons. de Lesseps for such a division of authority. He spoke with an evident desire to act justly, which ensured the sympathy of his audience, but when he came to formulate the conditions which he would be willing to accept, it was at once apparent that his councils were not likely to produce much practical result. What chance is there that Mons. de Lesseps would give up all that he has hitherto struggled successfully to maintain; that he would accept a Board composed of Englishmen and Frenchmen in equal proportions; that he would consent to hold every alternate meeting in London?

The speaker himself foresaw the probability of refusal, and went on to say that, if we tried conciliation and failed, our moral position would then be so strong, that we should be justified in making a new Canal, in spite of any objections which might be raised. The conclusion, if any objections include legal objections, is at least doubtful and certainly hazardous. Nor is an offer made in such terms likely to increase the friendly feeling of those to whom it is addressed. It partakes too much of the nature of a threat. If it were conceivable that such proposals should be accepted, how would the arrangement work? How could the difficulty be obviated, which was at once suggested by another speaker, that there must be one supreme legal authority, either English or French, to try such questions as must from time to time arise between the Company and individual shipowners?

Even if we suppose that Mons. de Lesseps met our offers with a cordiality which he has not previously shown, that he denationalised his Company and reconstituted it under an Anglo-French direction, how would such an agreement be regarded by both nations?

In England we are congratulating ourselves on the abolition of the Dual Control, the inconveniences and perils of which are now fully understood. The proposal referred to above implies the restoration of the Dual Control, at that precise point where the interests of England are most hazarded by divided rule. The one assured result of our recent expedition to Egypt would thus be destroyed, and the recent policy of the Government rendered futile. The solution would be no solution at all, but a temporary expedient, sure to break down sooner or later. To make a formal partnership

between Englishmen and Frenchmen in the Suez Canal would be to renew, in spite of the lessons of experience, the blunder which we made at first. We are now the partners of France in the ownership of the Canal shares; the existing arrangements do not suit us; will their inconveniences be removed by increasing the number of English Directors? Will not a Board thus divided be the scene of incessant conflicts between opposing parties? Is there not something more than a chance that quarrels, begun in the committee room, may find echoes beyond its walls? What we want is the undivided control of our own road to our own possessions, not a share in a road liable to all the disputes and intrigues to which the Dual Control gave rise. It is now again in our power to say whether the road to India shall be English or not. Are we a second time to throw away the opportunity of securing such an advantage?

In France the Canal is regarded with legitimate pride. Whatever its defects, whatever the faults of its promoters may have been, its annals are still the brightest page which Frenchmen have contributed to the industrial history of the world. It was made in opposition to the weight of English opinion; it has proved to be a remarkable success. Now that the work is done, will Frenchmen be willing to admit us to an equal share in their authority over it? The question is one on which they will feel, not argue, and they will feel strongly. To make a second Canal is to pay them the compliment of imitation, to admit that they have taught us a lesson, as they have. To obtain by negotiation with the Directors of the Company a surrender of the rights in the Suez Canal, which Frenchmen regard as the property of the Nation, and to do this as a result of our recent action in Egypt, would be

to wound them in their tenderest point. They will be blind to the substantial advantages of a partnership—advantages so great that England ought never to concede them—and they will see only that France has lost the last relic of her old supremacy in Egypt. The difficulties, which must attend such an attempt to harmonise conflicting interests, are far greater than those which beset commercial treaties, and it has not been found easy to make or renew such engagements. If Mons. de Lesseps were to advocate any such proposal, he would become the most unpopular man in France, instead of being, as he now is, the representative of a very strong and united party; if he were to accept it at our suggestion, he would be regarded as the victim of English force and fraud.

The fact is, that on both sides of the Channel this whole question looms too large, and is too closely involved with the sentiments of patriotism to be treated as a pure matter of trade. The arguments that seem strong in London will sound very weak in Paris, and French utterances will only admit of imperfect translation into English. If Englishmen are right in seeing that the control of the road to India is essential to their empire; Frenchmen are not wrong in saying that the fact that four-fifths of the traffic is English gives England no right to the possession of a road made by France. Neither nation will permit a matter of such importance to be dealt with, as if no one was concerned in it beyond the shareholders on the one side and the customers of the Canal on the other. The argument of the pocket is not admissible.

We have thus reached these conclusions; that England cannot be content with the Suez Canal, as it at present exists, because it gives her neither security in

time of war, nor adequate accommodation for her trade in time of peace ; that neutralisation, while obviating some minor dangers, is an imperfect remedy for the present state of things, leaves some risks unguarded, weakens our power of defence if we should be directly attacked, and introduces new liabilities which are likely to be serious ; that the objects which England is bound to keep in view are not to be attained by enlarging or doubling the Canal under its present management ; and that a partnership between England and France in the ownership of an improved and extended Canal is not likely to be willingly accepted by either nation, would not satisfy English requirements, and would be full of menace for the future.

Only one course then remains to us, the one which has been already accepted by the Committee, whose decision was embodied in a motion unanimously carried. We must construct a second Canal, which shall be English property, and under the management of an English Company.

This course also will find French opponents, but there is a vast difference between objections raised on legal grounds, supported by valid arguments, appealing to admitted principles of justice, and mere clamour roused by popular excitement. The latter may be expected to die away, the former live, and sooner or later are judged and estimated at their real worth. It is not desirable that we should sacrifice the interests of England, and perhaps the future existence of our Indian Empire, to French jealousy of our influence in Egypt, but it would be deplorable that we should, by taking undue advantage of our present position, afford France just ground of complaint. We cannot force any step upon

the Suez Canal Company which amounts to the unwilling surrender of acquired rights. With the concession granted to Mons. de Lesseps by the Viceroy, confirmed by the Sultan, and tacitly approved by ourselves for a quarter of a century, we cannot meddle. Since what we find it necessary to do must be unwelcome to our neighbours, we are bound to keep within the limits of the most scrupulous legality; unable to avoid giving some offence, we must take every care to give no just cause of offence. Our plain duty and our future safety are inseparable; but, if we have no right to use our present opportunity to the injury of Mons. de Lesseps, neither has he any right to use his position on the Isthmus to check the natural development of British trade. We may not force him to act with us, but we are perfectly at liberty to act without him.

There need be, and there should be, no hostility whatever to the existing Canal. The measures which we propose to take are purely of self-defence, not of aggression. In protecting ourselves we need injure no one. The present Company is in possession of the shortest route, and has an unquestionable right to retain that great advantage, which is amply sufficient to secure a full return for the capital invested. This part of the subject can hardly be better illustrated than by a quotation from the speech of the Chairman at the Meeting held on May the 10th. The Canal was constructed to convey 6,000,000 tons of shipping annually from sea to sea. This was the estimate of the engineers who made it. It now conveys more than 7,000,000 tons, and its traffic is steadily increasing. It is actually at the present moment doing more work than it was intended to do, and more than it is capable of doing with due regard to

the convenience of its largest customers. The new Canal will take from the old nothing which the latter has a fair claim to retain. It will simply be required to do the work which the old Canal is incapable of doing, and by the time that it is finished there will be abundant work for both. Who shall venture to say that Englishmen have no right to supply their own needs, when the French Canal is inadequate to supply them? Mons. de Lesseps has no more authority to close Egypt against the passage of any number of vessels which our merchants may desire to send to the East, than the makers of the first railway through a new country would have to prohibit the construction of a second. A Canal is a road, and nothing more. As population and traffic increase, new roads are required and are made. All that the makers of a second or of a third road can be required to do, is to respect the property of their predecessors in similar work.

It remains to consider the direction which the second Canal should take. Some doubt may exist as to the precise value of Mons. de Lesseps' concession, but the most favourable interpretation of that document can give him no rights outside the Isthmus of Suez. The rest of the country is open to us. Egypt is already intersected by numerous Canals, and there are no engineering difficulties which will prevent the construction of any number of others, of any dimensions which may be required. The new Canal will have to be somewhat longer than the original work—so much is admitted—but the whole voyage need be no longer. An increased length of Canal may be compensated by a diminished length of sea-passage. Nor does increased length of Canal necessarily involve increased delay. A comparatively rapid

transit may be secured by better construction, by greater width, by improved arrangements, by the removal of needless and irritating restrictions.

Some objections, which have been raised above to the Suez Canal, will apply in various degrees to every Canal through Egypt ; a road which crosses foreign territory can never offer the same complete security as one which lies entirely within our own jurisdiction. This is a disadvantage inherent in the circumstances of the case, which we cannot entirely escape, but which we can materially modify. Much will be gained by placing the new Canal under English management from the first ; something will be added to safety by separating the line of the new Canal as much as possible from that of the old one ; but it is only by making the new Canal useful to Egypt, which the Suez Canal certainly is not, that her co-operation can be secured for its construction, its preservation, and its defence. In this respect the promoters of the existing Canal were curiously short-sighted. They made vast promises, they acquired a strange influence over the minds of the Egyptian rulers, they obtained concessions of land, money and men to an incredible amount, and they not only gave nothing in return, but inflicted an immense injury on the country which had welcomed them. In many conversations recently held with Egyptian statesmen nothing struck the writer of this paper more than the universal agreement of opinion with regard to the proceedings of the Suez Canal Company. There was not one who did not refer to them with detestation. Rightly or wrongly Egyptians speak of the whole concern as a gigantic job, by which their country was robbed. The secret history of the Canal is yet

unchronicled, but an entirely independent witness, Mons. de Leon, the American Consul-General* has published an estimate of the sums contributed by Egypt to that undertaking. These money payments amounted to £17,423,178. The entire cost of the Canal was probably between eighteen and nineteen millions. In this reckless expenditure the Egyptians see one great source of the public debt, which still burdens the nation, and if we are so ill-advised as to make an open alliance with the owners of the Suez Canal, we must be prepared to share the odium attached to their name.

One main object of the new Company should be to remedy the damage which Egypt has suffered ; not that we are in any way called upon to atone for misdeeds with which we had nothing whatever to do, but because it is the interest of England to support and strengthen that Power, in whose keeping her road to India lies. If we cannot be the owners of the road, we can at least do something to secure the independence of the gatekeeper. The stronger Egypt is, the better will she be able to resist foreign intrigue or pressure ; and gratitude for the services already rendered will be best secured by the future development of all the resources of the country, agricultural and commercial. For that development a new Canal may do much. Egypt must in future be our ally, and while strong allies are valuable to any nation, however great and powerful, weak allies are only sources of danger.

Economy, too, must be studied. No new Company will ever induce the Egyptian Government to provide the enormous subventions which Mons. de Lesseps and the

* See Appendix to Egypt under its Khedives.

Emperor Napoleon the Third extorted from the Viceroy. The only way in which Egypt is likely to give, or indeed could afford to give pecuniary assistance, is by moderate payment for services actually rendered, and the Canal should for this reason, as well as for that already given, take a direction, and be of a nature, to benefit the country through which it passes. Economy must be sought not in diminishing the outlay but in multiplying the sources of income. The expenditure which any such work demands, must be large, but any expenditure, however large, is yet economical, which produces an adequate return. It is sufficiently obvious that, if one great undertaking can be made to produce several distinct results, from each of which a separate revenue may be derived, the capital expended on attaining each result will be less than that of several Companies would be, each of which might separately undertake the different portions of the complex whole. One Company being in possession of several sources of income will be able to accept a lower rate of remuneration for each service rendered, than separate Companies would be compelled to demand. If therefore the new Company can do work for Egypt, and derive a portion of its revenue from Egypt, it is evident that the transit dues can be materially lowered, while Egypt will pay less for what she receives than she would otherwise be required to pay. Both countries will profit alike by sharing the payments and the services of the Canal.

The selection of the line which the new Canal should take, becomes then for many reasons of extreme importance. It will be for the Committee, with the assistance of the most competent advice, to choose the best road, which is not necessarily the shortest, nor the

cheapest. These are points, which will rightly receive due attention, but which should not be suffered to exclude still weightier considerations. It is not supposed that any one of the plans which are now before the public, can be adopted without important modifications and additions—probably no one engineer will prove to be master of the whole situation—but one thing will at all events not be denied, that it is possible to make a new Canal more secure, more convenient than the existing Canal, and far more remunerative in proportion to the capital expended. If the result of the labours of the Committee should eventually be to give to England a safe road to the East, while ensuring to Egypt by a wise consideration for her needs those benefits, which a Canal might be expected to confer on the country through which it passes, but which the Suez Canal does not and cannot from its nature and position ever confer, they will render to both countries services, the importance of which it is impossible to exaggerate.

O. C. WATERFIELD.

May 28th, 1883.





